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HOMEMAkers' CHAT

FRIDAY, June 13, 1941

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: "STRAWBERRIES". Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

Today, my broadcast is about one of the best things that come out of the kitchen all summer. I mean strawberry preserves--good strawberry preserves in which the berries keep their attractive shape--their lovely color--and their distinctive flavor.

You can easily make strawberry preserves that are all this and more say the home economics experts in the U. S. Department of Agriculture. All you have to do is to follow a few simple rules. And here are those rules--in the words of the home economists themselves.

Rule 1 is--select your strawberries carefully.

"Be sure the berries are firm-ripe--not soft-ripe. Try to get all the strawberries about the same size so they will cook evenly. And preserve only strawberries of the best quality.

"You can judge quality in strawberries by looking at them. Good strawberries are a solid red in color. And they are bright--and clean--and fresh looking. The caps and stems on the berries are green and fresh looking. And there's no mold on the berries or any white spots."

Rule 2 is--prepare the strawberries carefully.

"Wash the strawberries before you cap them or stem them. Otherwise they will lose some of their good juice in the cleaning water. The best way to wash the berries is to lift them out of the water. Then the dirt that settles to the bottom can be poured off of them easily. Don't let water from the faucet play on the

strawberries and don't let the berries stand in the water."

Rule 3 is--Work with small quantities of strawberries at one time for best results. About 6 to 8 pounds of berries is enough to handle at one time.

Rule number 4 is this--"Always weigh your ingredients. It's not at all accurate to measure berries because different amounts will pack into a measuring cup--depending on the size and the shape of the berries.

"Proportions for strawberry preserves are--1 pound of berries to 1 pound of sugar."

And the final important rule for making good preserves is this--Cut the cooking time down to a minimum.

"The longer a fruit is cooked, the more flavor of the fruit it loses. For the substances that give fruits their flavor are broken down by long cooking and go off into the air with the steam.

"A good way to cut down on the cooking time is to combine the sugar and the strawberries the night before. This draws just enough juice out of the strawberries to make it unnecessary to add more water. That way you have enough liquid to keep the sugar from scorching in the cooking--but not enough that you have to cook down the preserves to evaporate excess liquid. Also, combining the sugar and the berries the night before makes the strawberries more firm, so they're not so likely to cook to pieces.

"If you combine the sugar and the berries the night before you cook them, it will take only 15 to 20 minutes of actual boiling time to make the preserves. They need to be boiled long enough so that the sirup is somewhat thick and the berries begin to look almost transparent."

In those five rules--I've really given you the recipe for good strawberry preserves. But here it is again in brief form.

"Wash the strawberries thoroughly. Then cap them and stem them. Weigh out from 6 to 8 pounds of these berries. For every pound of berries weigh out another pound of sugar.

"The night before you want to cook the preserves, combine the sugar and the berries in alternate layers. Next day--put these berries on to cook for 15 to 20 minutes.

"While the berries are on the stove--before they boil and while they are boiling--stir them constantly and carefully to keep them from burning. Boil the preserves rapidly for 15 to 20 minutes--or until the sirup is somewhat thick.

"At this point the preserves are done and ready to put into sterilized glass fruit jars. Fill the jars about three-fourths full of berries, then fill the jar the rest of the way with sirup. Seal immediately."

And that's the story of making strawberry preserves.

It looks now as though next winter's crop of strawberries as preserves should be a good one. For according to the U. S. Department of Agriculture's Crop Reporting Board, this season's fresh strawberry output is considerably larger than that of last year and much above average.

For, although the season started late this year, it made up for lost time by an extra heavy volume of shipments.

When you're eating fresh strawberries in season--here's one point to keep in mind.

"The strawberry is more than just a pretty, delicious fruit. From the standpoint of nutritive value, it is an excellent source of vitamin C. Vitamin C is needed in the diet every day because the body has no way of storing it. A medium-sized dish of raw strawberries, furnishes more than half of a liberal day's allowance for vitamin C.

"Heat destroys vitamin C. So, in strawberry season, you'll get the most vitamin C from the strawberries you eat raw. But you may also cut down on the loss of vitamin C in strawberry pies and tarts by cooking the berries just as little as possible."

That's all the strawberry news I have for today. But let me remind you again that "knee deep in June" is a good time to put up strawberry preserves for next winter.

